

CLASSIFICATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Ecuador

DATE DISTR. 9 April 1951

SUBJECT Factors, People and Groups Affecting the
Stability of the Plaza Regime

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1. Manuel Diaz Granados, Minister of Defense, gave orders for certain officers to be on duty on the evening of 26 March, at which time, it was feared, armed forces led by Carlos Mancheno Cajas would attack the units garrisoned in Quito, and action would be taken in Riobamba, Ambato, and Guayaquil. The Minister of Defense had been informed that Mancheno and his followers were not in their homes, and it was believed that action had been planned. It later became apparent that their absence was due to their plan to create small disturbances two or three times a week, in order to harass and sufficiently confuse the government in preparation for the revolutionary attack.
2. Information available to the Ministry of Defense indicates that many officers and troops, particularly in Quito, Ambato, and Riobamba, have promised to assist Mancheno.
3. In Guayaquil members of the Concentracion de Fuerzas Populares (CFP) have been holding "lightning meetings" of the same type utilized by the Communists in 1944 against the government of Dr. Arroyo del Rio. Only a few people participate in these meetings or demonstrations, designed to harass government officials, spread propaganda, or create unrest in general; and after such demonstrations, the participants disperse rapidly.
4. From statements made by Dr. Rafael Coello Serrano, a CFP leader imprisoned in Guayaquil, it appears that the following plan has been adopted: to begin a revolution in Quito with the immediate objective of liberating Dr. Carlos Guevara Moreno, who would then proceed immediately to Guayaquil to direct action there.*
5. In connection with newspaper accounts of plans to assassinate President Calo Plaza Lasso, a member of the CFP has indicated that this was actually planned by a Liberal and Socialist group. One of those involved was Luis Sempertigui, a Socialist.

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6. The wife of Dr. Carlos Guevara Moreno was in Quito during the week of 4-10 March. She has stated that Jose Maria Plaza, the President's brother, has threatened to liquidate Guevara. She further stated that the director of the penitentiary had informed her that twice Jose Maria Plaza, when intoxicated, had attempted to enter the prison at night, but was refused admittance. The director of the prison discussed this with the President, who has given orders not to admit his brother into the prison at any time.
- Doc. 7. A leaflet was published on 9 March and circulated by the CFP in Guayaquil, denouncing the grave crime against Guevara, their great leader, and urging all Ecuadorans to unite in protest against a government which closes its eyes to infamy and crime.
8. An open letter dated 12 March 1951, Quito Penitentiary, addressed to President Plaza by Guevara, has reportedly resulted in increased dissatisfaction with the present national government in many sectors in Guayaquil. (B-2) In this letter Guevara denounces the President for the unlawful imprisonment of patriotic citizens, for ignoring the mishandling of funds by the Junta de Reconstruccion, and for taking no measures to improve the economic conditions of the people. The letter further states that the President has not even hesitated to enlist the help of Marxists, thus betraying the international future of Ecuador and her position in continental defense. In conclusion Guevara writes that liberty and justice, scorned and exploited by the President, will triumph and once again be enjoyed by the Ecuadoran people. (Doc.)
9. Carlos Gil Quesada, uncle of Enrique Gil Gilbert, a Communist; close friend of the Minister of Defense; and also a frequent visitor of Rafael Coello Serrano, a CFP leader imprisoned in Guayaquil; has stated that the Minister of Defense, Col. Octavio Ochoa Ochoa, and Lt. Col. Alberto Mittman are planning a revolution against the government.** These officers reportedly have the support of Army units throughout Ecuador except those in Riobamba, Cuenca, and Guayaquil. According to Carlos Gil Quesada, the President's mother has stated that she wants her son to renounce the presidency. The President, therefore, is morally assisting the plans of Diaz, Ochoa, and Mittman through his mother.
10. Another generally reliable source has stated that he does not believe that a revolution led by Diaz, Ochoa, and Mittman is an immediate possibility. This source points out that the only action which the Minister of Defense would probably take would be to lead a counter-revolution in the event that an attempt is made to overthrow the government. A counter-revolution led by the Minister of Defense would probably receive the support of the Conservatives.

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Comment: The source of this paragraph is the same as that of paragraph two in [REDACTED]. The information has been repeated in order to indicate the origin of source's information.

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**Comment: This tends to confirm Captain Avila's statement reported [REDACTED].

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